

Suburban Life

Lorraine McCallish editor/477-5450



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Be my Valentine

Imaginative ideas

By Ruette Shand
special writer

VALENTINE'S DAY, traditionally a day of hearts and flowers, or candles and cards, doesn't necessarily have to be associated with cloyingly sweet things or witty sentiments.

This year, in particular, you may want to consider alternatives to traditional things such as sweets and flowers. For one thing, it seems as if everyone is balanced on a scale. And, since florist Wesley Berry II told us that a weak harvest and big demand have skyrocketed the price of roses to \$15 a dozen, it just may be the time to surprise your Valentine with something original that indicates that you really did spend some time selecting something wickedly witty that doesn't offer a single calorie.

THE FACT occurred to us that Valentine's Day is traditionally the one day of the year when we see conservative women wearing red hearts splashed here and there on their clothing, and men can be seen wearing red or pink ties with matching pocket squares.

And, considering the plethora of heart motifs — we even see them on undergarments at many fashionable stores — heaven only knows how many people may be wearing a warm, loving message next to the skin under all their conservative clothing.

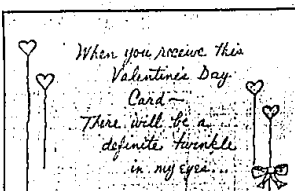
Loving messages can be found in a variety of packages this year. Luomo Vogue, the posh menswear store on Northwestern Highway in Southfield, for example, has a collection of men's underwear considered to be so subversive that it's being kept under the counter.

In the women's lingerie department at Saks Fifth Avenue, the Troy store, there is a red lace and satin string bikini that is so miniscule that it hardly matters.

However, loving messages don't have to be erotic or even suggestive. In contrast to the string bikini, the same department offers a one size fits all, huge, white sleep shirt with "LOVE" boldly printed in four different primary colors.

HUDSON'S HAS an outerwear sweat shirt for a male Valentine in your life that declares for all the world to read — if you can get him to wear it — that he is "The World's Best Lover."

And, in the same store, there are aprons for the Valentine cook that are a bit on the unusual side. One comes in bright red satin cut in the shape of a



Tom Bruno has designed a group of Valentines he believes will help people express love for each other on this one special day of the year.

no calories to count

teddy. Another has a built-in vase equipped to hold water and a fresh flower.

An interesting item at Roz & Sherm's in Bloomfield Plaza is strictly for the person who likes to hold a comforting hand in the rain. A large black umbrella (\$85) sports a black handle that is really a mannikin's hand, complete with highly manicured fingernails and three large, sparkling bangle bracelets.

We've come a long way since the days when people wrote little notes that said such things as, "Roses are red, violets are blue, sugar is sweet, and so are you." At an even younger age the popular refrain was, "Love you little, love you big, love you like a little pig." That was the ultimate in titillation, particularly when sent anonymously to the little boy or girl next door.

But, for the most part people have stopped writing their own little notes, relying instead on the commercial greeting card industry to supply us with messages of love.

TOM BRUNO of Troy, who recently retired



You can shower her with love with an unusual umbrella, \$85, that became an instant hit with gift-giving customers at Roz & Sherm, Bloomfield Plaza.

from the ministry says, "We seem to need a special occasion in our lives to express our love; otherwise we begin to take each other for granted."

Valentine's Day inspired him, he says, to illustrate and write romantic cards which are sold through the Cargo Hold card shop and Gail's Office Supply in Birmingham.

"I have seen you at your best, and I have seen you at your worst, and I am still here loving you," is one example of his tough love approach to St. Valentine's Day. Also, "Love which weathers the storms of life has a proven record sharing the rainbow together."

One sentiment that particularly appeals to this writer is, "You do at least 1,000 things during the year that make my life happy and I love you for each one of them."

BOOKS ARE always welcome. As Valentine gifts they are particularly nice because they help with long winter evenings. And, even if the choice doesn't always offer an intellectual exercise, at least it's calorie free.

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Praise Fest

Ecumenical gathering entertains, teaches and gives spiritual uplift

The Rev. Wayne Reece comes from First United Methodist Church in Big Rapids to open "Praise Fest '86" with his one-man show called "Attorney for the Defense."

His dramatic portrayal of Nicodemus is followed by a full day of study, enlightenment, prayer and praise that makes up the ecumenical gathering sponsored by the congregation of First United Methodist Church of Farmington Friday and Saturday, Feb. 28 and March 1 in the church on Grand River and Warner.

"There was no question in our minds that we were going to do this again," said James Persimpe, who was involved in the planning of "Praise Fest '85" as well as "Praise Fest '86."

"We had close to 100 turn out last year and from the comments we got then we are expecting twice that number this year. Our format is much the same, music, Bible study, workshops, fellowship, sharing and caring, with a lot of talent and Rev. Reece as our headliner this year," he said.

Reece is known for his dramatic style of preaching and teaching, using dramatic monologues based on the scriptures. His biographical and cultural-historical readings brings Biblical characters to life stressing revelation, rather than entertainment.

In "Attorney for the Defense," Rev. Reece takes the role of Nicodemus in a setting before the Sanhedrin on Good Friday morning, as he pleads the case of Jesus, and focuses on the many ille-

galities that led irrevocably to the Crucifixion.

THE ONE-MAN show begins at 7:30 p.m. Friday. Saturday's session opens at 8:30 a.m. and continues through dinner and an evening concert. During the day participants can choose to attend four of eight offerings.

The local Praise Fest was initiated by a group of congregants who traveled together for several years to a similar gathering in Indianapolis, Ind.

"It was a very commercial praise gathering," Persimpe said. "Good in the gospel sense, but commercial. For us to go down there for a couple of days turned out to be very expensive, several hundred dollars for each one of us at least. We realized we had all the talent we needed to do this for ourselves at home and we're doing it all for \$20."

The \$20 ticket includes the one-man show, the educational offerings, dinner, but not lunch, Saturday and the wind-up concert. The format also allows participants to pick and choose to attend the meals or workshops or entertainment on an individual basis. A complete brochure will be sent on request, or specific information will be given, by calling the church office, 474-6573.

The workshop leaders are Dr. Alfred Ramsey, director of United Methodist Church Conference Council; the Rev. Gary L. Damon, director of Annual

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YOU CAN HELP

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The Rev. Wayne Reece will play the role of Nicodemus in "Attorney for the Defense" when he comes to "Praise Fest '86" sponsored by the congregation of First United Methodist Church of Farmington.